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RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICIAL RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION Michael B. Taylor Receives USDA Honor Award in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, DC, June 25, 2004—Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana, was presented a USDA Honor Award by Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman for utilizing more than \$702 million to improve the quality of life for more than 160,000 rural families in Louisiana.

“It is through the tireless commitment of USDA employees that we make a difference in people’s lives on a daily basis,” said Veneman. “The award winners honored today are exemplary in their fields. We applaud their efforts and innovative work.”

Taylor was appointed Louisiana State Director of USDA Rural Development by President George W. Bush. As State Director of Rural Development, Taylor is responsible for the direction and delivery of the agency’s rural development programs in Louisiana. Rural Development is the Department’s lead agency for community and economic development activities. As State Director, Taylor is charged with delivering loans and grants amounting to over \$223 million this year and maintaining a loan portfolio of \$1.7 billion.

The Honor Awards are the most prestigious awards given by USDA. There are 102 award winners this year. The honorees represent outstanding service in many fields, such as stewardship of natural resources, rural economic development, scientific research, food safety, environmental innovations, emergency response to disasters, farm and food program delivery, educational outreach, trade and export development and disease control. USDA also honored employees who had performed individual acts of heroism and courage. This year’s USDA Honor Award recipients are listed on the USDA website: <http://www.usda.gov/da/04HonorAwards58th.pdf>.

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. Further information on USDA Rural Development’s loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development’s website at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/la/>.

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